



Woodton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120866
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291886
Inspection date 2 February 2007
Reporting inspector John Messer

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Norwich Road
School category	Community		Woodton, Woodton
Age range of pupils	4-11		Bungay, Suffolk NR35 2LL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01508 482294
Number on roll (school)	25	Fax number	
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Jane Bond
		Headteacher	Mrs Pauline McGowan
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This village primary school is exceptionally small but is growing and has recently doubled in size. Pupils are taught in two classes. It is closely linked in a partnership with a nearby school in Ellingham and shares the same headteacher and administrative staff as its partner school. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. Most but not all children enter the school with standards of attainment that are below average, especially in communication, language and literacy. Very nearly a third of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities and an exceptionally high proportion have statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The proportion that join the school, after the usual starting time in the Reception year, is high because many transfer from larger schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has many strengths. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and she has transformed the school out of all recognition since she took charge. The school has made good progress since its last inspection. The curriculum is good and relevant to pupils' needs. Pupils are taught about the importance of conservation, recycling and the need to look after our planet. Pupils use computers confidently and develop a wide range of skills in information and communication technology (ICT). They have made a good start in developing the skills necessary to support them in their working lives. Teachers from this school and its partner school work exceptionally well together on curricular planning and staff expertise is shared very effectively. Care, support and guidance for pupils are good. Although the school is small, that is never allowed to become a disadvantage, as every pupil receives close supervision and attention. One pupil summed this up, 'There are so many adults and so few children that everybody gets a great deal of individual help and they target the bits you find hard so that it soon becomes easy.' Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. They know how to look after themselves, eat sensibly and stay healthy.

Teaching and learning are good. Children settle happily in the Reception class and achieve well. Teachers plan lessons carefully to cater for the needs of the extremely wide range of age and ability in each class. The impact of classroom assistants on pupils' learning is adequate overall but varies widely according to their degree of expertise. Some are highly effective but others supervise pupils well without supporting learning sufficiently. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, achieve well and make good progress. Standards are broadly average, although the faster learners attain high standards. Pupils' personal development is good. They attend regularly, enjoy school immensely and develop good levels of self-confidence.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has led a series of highly effective initiatives to improve the quality of education. She manages the school exceptionally well and close links between the two communities have been forged. Pupils from both schools sing in the joint choir, go on visits together and take part in video conferencing. The old buildings have been refurbished and new extensions have been built, including a good sized hall. The headteacher has succeeded in establishing a productive climate for learning. The school has recognised the need to develop the roles of subject leaders in order to raise standards further and has embarked upon plans to achieve this. Governors are fully involved in creating plans to raise standards. The school's self evaluation is accurate and it is realistic about the need to raise standards further. Parents are delighted with the education provided for their children. Finances are managed efficiently and the school provides good value for money. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more training and guidance for teaching assistants so that they all support pupils' learning effectively.

- Develop the roles of subject leaders so that they are more instrumental in raising standards across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities flourish because they are particularly well supported by teachers and often by classroom assistants. Children's achievement in the Reception class is good. Pupils' achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science is good in Years 1 to 6. As there are only a few pupils in each year group, standards fluctuate from year to year, but all make good progress, often from low starting points, and most attain at least average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When there are faster learners in a year group standards are above average. By Year 6, the more able pupils exceed the national target of Level 4 and attain the higher Level 5 standards in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children enjoy school so attendance is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and friendly. Pupils receive masses of encouragement and enjoy the certificates awarded for especially good work or behaviour. They are well-behaved, enthusiastic learners and are keen to do well. Some arrive at the school with complex learning and social difficulties. They are nurtured carefully and soon begin to flourish. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others. They look after each other and the older ones are particularly good at helping the youngest children. They are polite and enjoy discussing major issues such as global warming and renewable energy. The school's multi-cultural week helps them to appreciate different customs and beliefs.

Pupils have been encouraged to form committees to improve the school environment. The library committee designed a new library, ripped out the old fittings, chose curtains, made cushions, helped to select new books and learned how to run the library. A travel plan committee is currently creating a travel plan aimed at encouraging half the children to walk or cycle to school. Above all, pupils develop increasing self-confidence and a strong belief in themselves as successful learners. They have been well-prepared for the next stage of their education and for their life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Until last year there have, for several years, been no children in the Reception class. Now, very nearly a quarter of the school are in this age-group. The school has adjusted provision to cater for these children and teaching is good. However, when the youngest children are working independently in small groups, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop their use of language and to expand their vocabulary.

The school has a high number of adults compared to the number of pupils, with the result that, for much of the time, pupils receive individual attention. This is particularly valuable for the high proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Tasks are adjusted to provide suitable challenges for the more able pupils so that they also make good progress. Many pupils know how to develop their understanding of key topics and skills by themselves without relying on too much support from adults. Particularly good work was seen in a literacy lesson where pupils were studying explanatory texts. Here they used their scientific knowledge about generating electricity to create annotated diagrams and written explanations about how wind turbines work. Their interest in this topic promoted high levels of motivation and they all concentrated hard throughout the lesson. They conduct research on the internet and create carefully written, well presented pieces of work. The school has identified the need to make teaching even more stimulating by extending the creative use of themes that capture pupils' interest and imagination.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a strong emphasis in the curriculum on teaching pupils about ecology. They develop a good understanding of renewable energy, recycling, energy conservation and how to grow their own food. They are well aware of the dangers of global warming, know how to stay safe and understand the importance of a healthy diet. The curriculum is also appropriately balanced so that pupils receive a well rounded education. Literacy, numeracy, ICT and science skills receive intensive support. Music and sport are well represented and French is taught from Reception onwards. Resources are good and classrooms are bright and colourful. Video conferencing is used well to bring specialist expertise into the classroom. Experts from the National Portrait Gallery, for example, are invited to address pupils via the video connection and answer their questions about famous paintings. Good links with the local high schools support the school's work in gymnastics, mathematics, science and ICT. There have been many innovative curricular developments and the school is conscious of the need to monitor new aspects of the curriculum and to consolidate the changes that have been introduced.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils are looked after well. Teachers know pupils very well and are sensitive to individual needs. They offer pupils good guidance about their personal development and talk to them about how to improve their work. Pupils say that the school is a friendly place where they feel safe and secure. Child protection arrangements meet requirements and are understood by all staff. The school has identified the need to monitor pupils' progress, especially the progress of those with learning difficulties, even more thoroughly in order to identify areas where progress could be accelerated.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She is quietly dynamic and gets things done rapidly. The school has benefited from several substantial grants to improve the education it is able to provide its pupils. Major changes have been introduced so that a vibrant climate for learning has been established. The school has gained the confidence of parents and the local community. Staff from both the partner schools share expertise and hold joint staff meetings via video conferencing. The role of subject leaders is an area for further development so that they can have more impact on raising standards across the school. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the key issues in the last report have been tackled successfully. Good communication with parents is a strength and parents support the school wholeheartedly. Governors monitor the work of the school closely. They assist with school visits and are vigilant about all safety issues. They are fully involved in assisting with the school's self-evaluation. Financial control is good and money is spent wisely.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 February 2007

Dear Children

Woodton Primary School, Norwich Road, Woodton, Bungay, Suffolk, NR35 2LL

What a lovely school! I really enjoyed my short visit. Thank you for being so friendly and for telling me all about your school.

Everybody agrees that the very small size of the school is a key strength. There are so many adults working to help you that for much of the time you get individual attention and this helps you to learn well. You are certainly cared for well and you make good progress in literacy, numeracy and science. Another great strength is the close partnership that has been made with Ellingham School. You gain a lot from being able to sing together in the same choir, go on visits together and make more friends so that your circle of friends is extended before you join together at the high school. Your headteacher works extremely hard to manage both schools. She has helped you to make your school so bright and welcoming. She gives you a great deal of responsibility, such as asking you to form a committee to create a new library and another to organise a travel plan. The video conferencing is a wonderful idea and helps you to share ideas with Ellingham School and talk to people with particular expertise in places like the National Portrait Gallery. The new school hall and the extensive grounds help to create a lovely learning environment. You learn lots of valuable things, such as the importance of renewable energy sources, like wind generators, how to look after your environment and to grow your own food. What could be more important than learning how we might protect the planet from global warming?

You told me that you think that you go to a good school and there is not much that you would like to change, except a wider range of new books in the Oaks class. I think that there are two main things that need to be done to make the school even better. For the first time in a long time there is a large proportion of children in the Reception year and many of them are still only four. I think that helpers could ask the youngest children how things work and why things happen a little more so that the little ones are encouraged to develop their speech and communication skills more. Also, I think that teachers who are in charge of subjects could become more involved in helping to make plans to raise standards further.

With all best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Messer